

The OHSU Pituitary Unit

Pituitary Tumors and Disorders

To be diagnosed with a pituitary tumor or disease can be extremely frightening. Patients often feel sick from hormonal imbalances and may suffer from severe headaches or vision loss. Their physicians often know little about pituitary tumors and disorders and have few patient educational resources. Patient questions frequently asked include: Will I need surgery? Will I ever feel normal and be able to lead a functional life again? Will I be on medications for the rest of my life? How do I learn more about my disorder?

Although the Internet offers a lot of information on pituitary tumors and other pituitary disorders, it can be a daunting task for a patient to sort through this vast pool of information. It can be difficult to determine what is credible and what is misleading. To promote meaningful patient education, the "Especially for Patients" section of the OHSU Pituitary Unit web site teaches the basics of pituitary disease, its management, and how to work with your doctor to make a diagnosis. It also includes an annotated list of useful web sites and other patient resources.

The "Especially for Patients" section is intended to address two groups of patients: 1) those that have been diagnosed with a pituitary tumor or disease, and 2) those who feel they might have a pituitary disorder but are concerned they have not received an adequate work-up. See the menu on the left for more information or click on the "Browse OHSU Pituitary" at the top left of each page.

To the patient with a pituitary tumor or disease

- Don't panic! The vast majority of pituitary tumors are benign and about half can be treated with medications (prolactinomas). If surgery is required, a qualified surgeon can easily resect most pituitary tumors. Therefore, the first critical step if you have a pituitary tumor that needs to be removed is to find a qualified surgeon. The second critical step is to find a good endocrinologist. This is important whether you have a pituitary tumor or other pituitary disease. As a rule, centers that have good pituitary surgeons also have good neuroendocrinologists. A list of pituitary management centers around the country is listed at OHSUpituitary.com, under "Patient Support Resources."

To the person who believes they may have a pituitary tumor or disease

- There is hope! This section will help you to work with your physician to rule-in or rule-out the diagnosis. The challenge for physicians in considering if a patient is likely to have pituitary disease is that many symptoms are very non-specific (e.g., fatigue, headache, constipation, cold-intolerance, hot flashes, etc). In most cases, patients with these symptoms do not have pituitary tumors or

disease. Fortunately, if the right tests are ordered, it is relatively easy to rule in or out a pituitary disorder. A printable document, The Basic Pituitary Tumor/Pituitary Disease Work-Up is available under the section: [How do I work with my Doctor to find out if I have a Pituitary Disorder?](#)

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